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15 June 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR : Acting Chief, Development Projects Division

SUBJECT : Del Rio Stagings

1. I met with Kelly Johnson the morning of 15 June to discuss again the possibility of acquiring by lease or arrangement a Jetstar (C-140) aircraft to move personnel from Edwards Air Force Base to Laughlin Air Force Base in connection with the long-persistent Cuban requirement.

2. Without going too far into the matter, Kelly said that the Jetstar was "out of the question". I assume, as I had earlier, that there are good corporate reasons for his statement. I could not see how the aircraft could be hired, even in its proto-type models, without an FAA certificate, and as you know, this is months away. In fact, production of the aircraft at Marietta has not gone beyond the first three or four models now in FAA test; this is in order to avoid making production mistakes which would have to be later rectified.

3. Kelly said that the 1649 Connie would be a considerable improvement if we wish to use it, and that across the profile from Edwards to Del Rio and return it can be operated in such a way that it is only two hours slower than the Jetstar. He was quick to realize that there are obvious problems connected with using the 1649 on such a schedule, and we indicated to him that aside from the security considerations, there were budget concerns about operating the aircraft in this manner indefinitely over an 1,800 mile round trip about once a week. Further discussion of the 1649 was therefore dropped.

4. Kelly then suggested that Headquarters give consideration to the use of the IFR equipped J-75 aircraft. He proposed that the mission be loaded, briefed, and launched from Edwards Air Force Base with mid-course refueling possibly out of Homestead Air Force Base, for example. Under this scheme we might wish to consider simply prepositioning a small crew at Del Rio to download the airplane, and after

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the mission, refuel and return to Edwards empty. As you know, we have tin cut for another IFR installation, and Kelly indicated that if we wish to go ahead in order to give us a two-aircraft capability, he could complete the other IFR installation in from thirty to forty days.

5. I offer this to you for consideration and discussion with [] and his people, since I honestly feel at the present time there is little prospect of dramatically improving our air transport capability between Edwards and Del Rio. I would be glad to discuss this with you if you see fit.

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JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Assistant Chief
DPD-DD/P

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DPD-DD/P:JACunningham, Jr./mg

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